

"Diplomacy And Sanctions Are Not Mutually Exclusive"

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Congressman Mike Pence delivered the following opening statement during a full House Foreign Affairs Committee markup of H.R. 2194, the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act of 2009, which passed unanimously:

"I am glad to be here today and I appreciate the Chairman and the Ranking Member's leadership in bringing H.R. 2194 before this committee, which has extraordinary bipartisan support in this committee, and before the Congress.

"The bill before us today, if enacted, would amend the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 to provide additional tools the Administration should use to pressure Iran where words have failed.

"Despite the fact that the prevailing diplomatic winds these days blow in the direction of diplomacy alone, I believe with all my heart that diplomacy and sanctions are not mutually exclusive; the action that this committee will take today and, I hope, that this Congress will take in the very near future in moving and enacting the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act, will greatly strengthen the position of the United States at the negotiation table with our allies relative to Iran.

"This past summer we saw vivid images of violent acts the Iranian regime was willing to commit against its own citizens to maintain its illegitimate grip on power. As dissidents took to the streets by the millions to express their opposition to the fraudulent election, a crackdown began with tragic results. Mr. Chairman, it was a great privilege for me to partner with you in bringing a bipartisan resolution to the floor of the Congress that gave the American people an opportunity to speak in solidarity with the dissidents in Iran and also to condemn the violence that took place there.

"The reality was-at that time-Iran effectively declared war on its own people. We ought to ponder that as we think about the strength of this legislation and U.S. resolve. If this is the level of violence that a regime in Tehran is willing to use against its own citizens, what does it tell us about the level of violence they are willing to use against other nations?

"Iran's support for terrorism and pursuit of weapons of mass destruction have long threatened global peace and security. To the Iranian regime, the United States is the 'Great Satan,' and our cherished ally Israel has no right to exist.□ □

"Last week, Iran missed the deadline to respond to a proposed agreement between Iran and six world powers including the United States. Under the deal, Russia and France would accept 80 percent of Iran's known low-enriched uranium, process it for civilian purposes and then give it back to Iran. □ □

"Yesterday, Iran said it would agree to this general framework, we're told, but they said they would seek 'important changes.' This announcement should be seen for what it is: little more than a two-step to keep the negotiation process going while Iran continues in its headlong rush to obtain usable nuclear weapons.

"Iran's failure to meet deadlines and this current ploy to drag out negotiations further should come as no surprise. Iran has deceived the world community time and time again, and any assurance that their nuclear program is peaceful should be seen for what it is.

"The revelation last month of Iran's secret uranium enrichment facility near Qom has already shown Tehran's propensity for double-dealing. The world is left to wonder what other sites might be hiding thousands more centrifuges busily churning out highly enriched uranium and how long it will be before they have enough for a bomb. Already the leading state sponsor of terror, it would be only a matter of time before a nuclear-armed Iran made good on its threats.

"The international community and, I would argue, this country has talked long enough about Iran's nuclear ambitions; it's time for deeds. It's time to take real, concrete steps to economically isolate this discredited regime in Tehran.

"I urge support for the strongest possible measures to be included in the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act and again I commend the Chairman of this Committee and the Ranking Member of this Committee for their strong leadership in bringing this legislation before the Congress."

